

# Dewatering Wells

## Introduction

In Chapter 173-160-111 (21) WAC (Washington Administrative Code) it defines a dewatering well as a “cased or lined excavation or boring that is intended to withdraw or divert ground water for the purpose of facilitating construction, stabilizing a land slide, or protecting an aquifer.”

Currently, the most common use of a dewatering well is for dewatering a shallow aquifer to facilitate construction of underground utilities, a road, or a building foundation. The most common casing is Schedule 40 PVC casing. The average depth is about 20-feet. And the most common installation method is jetting. Hundreds of these wells are constructed and decommissioned in Washington every year.

## Q: Who can construct or decommission a dewatering well?

**A:** Washington State requires a water well operator’s license to construct or decommission a dewatering well.

## Q: Who is exempt from the licensing requirement?

**A:** Chapter 18.104.180 RCW (Revised Code of Washington) exempts Washington State licensed engineers, architects, and land surveyors from further licensing requirements. These persons must comply with all other requirements of law and rule.

## Q: What do I need to do first when I construct a dewatering well?

**A:** Make sure a Notice of Intent (NOI) to construct a dewatering well has been sent to Ecology and the required fees have been paid.

## WHY IT MATTERS

This is a summary of questions and answers regarding the laws and regulations of constructing or decommissioning dewatering wells.

The licensed well driller is responsible for understanding:

- Chapter 18.104 RCW: the Water Well Construction Act (1971)
- Chapter 173-160 WAC: Minimum standards for Construction and Maintenance of Wells, and
- Chapter 173-162 WAC: Rules and Regulations Governing the Regulation and Licensing of Well Contractors and Operators.

## Contact information:

Bill Lum  
(360) 407-6648  
[blum461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:blum461@ecy.wa.gov)

## Special accommodations:

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**Q: Who is responsible for submitting the Notice of Intent?**

**A:** It is the responsibility of the owner (or owner's agent) to inform Ecology that a dewatering well will be constructed or decommissioned at least 72-hours in advance of any work.

**Q: Do I file a well report if I construct or decommission a dewatering well?**

**A:** Yes. A dewatering well report must be filed with Ecology within 30 days of completion of construction or decommissioning the well--one report per well.

**Q: Does a dewatering well require a tag?**

**A:** Yes. The driller is responsible for tagging every dewatering well that they construct within thirty days of completion of the well.

**Q: Is a surface seal required for a dewatering well?**

**A:** Yes. Permanent dewatering wells (in place more than twelve months) require a (minimum) ten foot bentonite surface seal. Temporary dewatering wells require a (minimum) three foot bentonite surface seal.

**Q: What is the fee for dewatering for sewer line installation along a road that is 1,000 feet long?**

**A:** The combined fee for construction AND decommissioning of a dewatering well is \$40 per two hundred horizontal lineal feet of the dewatering well system. This project would be 1,000-feet divided by two hundred feet = 5, multiplied by a fee of \$40 per two hundred horizontal lineal feet, a \$200 fee.

**Q: Who is responsible for decommissioning a dewatering well?**

**A:** The property owner is responsible for decommissioning the well.

**Q: What do I need to do first when I decommission a dewatering well?**

**A:** Make sure a NOI to decommission a dewatering well has been sent to Ecology. No fees are required.

**Q: How do I decommission a dewatering well?**

**A:** A dewatering well is decommissioned the same as a water well. Perforating or pulling the casing is required while applying an approved sealing material to the borehole.